



2004 Legislative Priorities

Uniform School Lock Down
Lead Department: Police

Background

- *What government functions are at issue?*

Saving lives and protecting public safety. Because most school districts in San Diego do not have their own police departments, local law enforcement officers are the first responders to crisis situations at schools.

Officers work closely with area schools to provide law enforcement services on campus, including education and crime prevention.

- *Why is legislation required?*

The Police Department is seeking legislation to require schools to adopt, implement, and regularly practice a uniform lock down plan. In response to the 1999 Columbine High School shooting and the 2001 shootings at Santana High School and Granite Hills High School in San Diego County and a hodgepodge of safety plans at individual schools, officers at the San Diego Police Department's Southern Division developed a uniform lock down plan. This plan ensures that public safety officers and school personnel respond to threats on school grounds requiring a lock down – an active shooter, a barricaded suspect, a hostage situation – in a coordinated and consistent manner. Similar to fire and earthquake drills, the lock down plan ensures that students, teachers, and public safety officers know their respective roles in responding safely and quickly to threats on campus.

The officers have gained the support of administrators in South Bay's seven school districts to adopt the plan for the 114 schools in these districts. However, implementation of the plan at the school level has presented challenges: on-site checks show that some schools do not follow the prescribed lock down plan, conduct regular drills, or have modified the plan to unwittingly put teachers and students at risk. Not following or not practicing the lock down plan defeats the safety benefits of a uniform and tactically sound plan.

The benefits of the lock down plan are that students will learn a consistent response, which they can rely on in the elementary, middle school, high school grades, in any school. School personnel and teachers also will learn a consistent response for any grade in any school, instead of trying to figure out a particular school's crisis plan. (Some plans notify school personnel of a threat with a code word, which substitute teachers likely

would not know.) Law enforcement officers and emergency medical technicians will learn a consistent response and will be able to rely on a safe and consistent response from school personnel and students. This is particularly important in serious or large-scale crime incidents such as school shootings, in which law enforcement agencies and other emergency responders at the local state, and federal levels provide mutual aid. To facilitate implementation of the plan, the Education Code provides avenues for grant funding that would pay for “train the trainer” programs, videos, and other training and plan materials.

Proposal

- *What section of state law requires amendment?*

Education Code section 35294.2(a)(2)(B): The comprehensive school safety plan shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following...Disaster procedures, routine and emergency, **including a uniform lock down plan approved by the local law enforcement agency. School districts shall ensure that school administrators conduct regular lock down drills for school personnel and students with law enforcement and other emergency responders.** Another option is adding a new section to the Education Code mandating the components of a lock down plan and the frequency of lock down drills, similar to existing Education code sections on earthquake and fire drills.

Strategy

- *Likely supporters, opponents, sponsors:*

Supporters to date include San Diego’s Fire and Life Safety Services, the Chula Vista Police Department. The Department will work through the County Chief’s Association and juvenile services officers in every division to enlist the support of other San Diego school districts. Additionally, the Department is presenting the lock down plan to teacher’s unions. There are no known opponents to the benefits of a consistent lock down plan. Potential supporters include South Bay legislators.